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Then there is the 'Balkan fact', with all that it implies of suspicion and particularities. It is commonly explained by the geographic configuration of the Peninsula, furrowed by valleys which have no inter-communication. No doubt the physical relief tends to perpetuate the clan spirit throughout all the various changes of sovereignty. But the ethnical variety does not give an exhaustive image of the Balkan mentality. Nor does the long practice of the *Divide ut imperes* principle, which was the Alpha and Omega of the Habsburg policy in the Balkans. These States, before becoming the successors to Austria-Hungary, were the heirs of Byzantium, and we may wonder whether the passion-charged atmosphere, the complex of distrust and turbulence which characterise them, are not a survival of Byzantine influence, in opposition to that Roman continuity and that tendency to universalism whose determining effects on Western civilisation have been analysed by Fustel de Coulanges, Dopsch and Pirenne.

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An event of incalculable significance for the Slavonic world occurred about the year 1933: the reappearance of Moscow on the European diplomatic stage—coinciding, if not tallying, with the rehabilitation by the Soviets of national values in Russian history.

In its critical years, the Bolshevist régime had relegated the racial idea to the status of romantic nonsense. 'Slavophilia', frowned upon as it was by the last Tsarist governments, still had about it an odour of reactionary and religious mysticism which would have been sufficient to keep it on the black-list, even had the idea of ethnical solidarity found a place in Marxist terminology. On the other hand, the policy of nationalities pursued by the U.S.S.R. had breathed new life into hitherto inorganic or unrecognised ethnical groups. In the time of the Tsars, who would have dreamed that Russia comprised no less than fifty nationalities or ethnical groups? It would have been ill-timed to give these people the impression that there existed in the U.S.S.R. a privileged race, whose traditions or ambitions dominated the life of the country, relegating the allogeneous republics to the condition of satellites. Decentralisation diluted Russian Slavism, and the plurality of tongues favoured by the Socialist Revolution deprived it of its trump card.